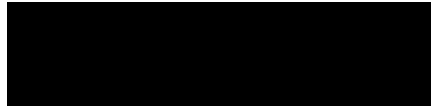
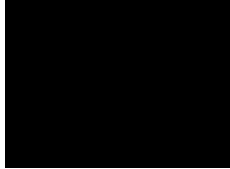


Objection to Planning Application PL/2026/04823

From:

Kevin & Amanda Bennett



8 October 2026

To:

Development Management Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge,
BA14 8JN

By email: developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk

Application reference: PL/2026/04823

Site: Land at Forest Farm, Pewsham, Chippenham, SN15 3RP

Proposal: Residential development of up to 600 dwellings with sole vehicular access from the A4 London Road

Applicant: Gleeson Land

Dear Sir or Madam,

We write to **object strongly** to outline planning application PL/2026/04823 for up to 600 dwellings, a local centre and associated works on land at Forest Farm, Pewsham, with sole vehicular access from the A4 London Road.

In summary, I ask the Council to refuse the application because:

1. Chippenham's road network cannot absorb the traffic, and the scheme relies on a link road and River Avon crossing that no one is funded to build.
2. Part of this site has already been refused by the Council and dismissed at appeal, and nothing material has changed.
3. The site lies outside the settlement boundary, is not allocated, and is a piecemeal first phase of a larger scheme that pre-emptes the new Local Plan.
4. The Environmental Statement understates cumulative, landscape and ecological effects.
5. The pre-application consultation was narrow and does not reflect the scale of local opposition.
6. The application form contains factual errors.

Grounds of objection

1. Highways, access and an unfunded link road

All traffic from 600 homes and a local centre would enter the A4 London Road and feed into Pewsham Way and Avenue La Fleche. Central Chippenham's road network already struggles at peak times and cannot take this additional load.

The site plan shows a 50mph estate road that stops at the site boundary. If this is intended as the first section of the former Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) southern route, the application's finances do not stand up:

- Wiltshire Council's Cabinet withdrew from the HIF on 13 December 2022, citing "further significant financial risk" to the Council ([Wiltshire Council](#)). That risk has not gone away, so the road and bridge will not be built with Council funds.
- The road and River Avon crossing (referenced below at section 3) were reported at a public meeting in Calne on 26 October 2023 as costing "north of £200m". No written note of that meeting was published.
- On an indicative basis, funding the road and bridge would add around £40,000 per dwelling, on top of an education S106 contribution of £7,330 per dwelling and site costs such as gas protection for elevated CO2 levels in parts of the site. No prudent housebuilder would buy the land on those terms.

The scheme therefore cannot show safe and suitable access or that its transport impacts can be mitigated, contrary to Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 60, 61 and 62 and NPPF Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport).

Published objections echo this: the Change.org petition cites existing congestion on school and work commutes ([petition](#)). The 2017 appeal Inspector also found that traffic speed and volume on Pewsham Way would make crossing it dangerous to many pedestrians, weakening the site's sustainability.

2. The site has already been refused and dismissed at appeal

Part of this site was the subject of application 15/11153/OUT by Gleeson Developments for up to 200 dwellings. The Council refused it, and Inspector Lesley Coffey dismissed the appeal (APP/Y3940/W/16/3150514) on 22 June 2017 ([decision](#)). She found that:

- the site lies outside settlement limits, is neither an exception site nor allocated in the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, and the proposal "would fail to comply with the delivery strategy of the Core Strategy"; and
- the development "would significantly harm the character and tranquillity of the surrounding rural area", including from public footpaths across the site and from London Road, even once landscaping matured.

The Chippenham Site Allocations Plan Examination (Inspector Patrick Whitehead) notes also set out reasons against developing this land. The current scheme is three times larger and would cause greater harm. The applicant does not explain what has changed to overcome these findings.

3. Unallocated, piecemeal and premature

The site is outside the Chippenham settlement boundary and is not allocated for development, contrary to Core Policies 1, 2 and 10. The site selection evidence shows it is not the best available site at this scale; other sites have far better access to the A350 and M4.

The applicant's own project website states that Gallagher Developments and Gleeson Land are jointly promoting around 1,200 homes (pewshamchippenham.co.uk). Yet this application makes no reference to the Gallagher land. Splitting the scheme hides the true scale of the sprawl and prevents proper assessment of its combined impacts.

Environmental Statement Chapter 1 (Tor & Co) says the draft Local Plan was withdrawn for reasons unrelated to Policy 7. This is not correct. Policy 7 depended on the distributor road and Avon crossing through Rowden Park to the Chippenham Community Hospital site, and it was the cost of that infrastructure that led the Council to withdraw from HIF. Granting permission now would pre-empt the new Local Plan.

4. The Environmental Statement understates the effects

Cumulative growth (Chapter 11, paragraph 11.8). The ES counts 3,697 dwellings still to be built. It omits other sites, including the jointly promoted Gallagher land and the approved development at Stanley Lane. Including them raises the total to around 4,297 dwellings and about 10,317 new residents: an increase of over 25% in Chippenham's population, not 21% as stated. Growth of that scale must affect air quality (Core Policy 55).

Heritage and landscape (paragraphs 11.15–11.48). The ES finds no cumulative effect. This development would complete the loss of the historic forest landscape that has existed on this and neighbouring land for centuries. The 2017 Inspector already found significant landscape harm from a much smaller scheme (Core Policy 51).

Ecology (paragraphs 11.49–11.50). The ES finds no significant effect on natural heritage and no cumulative effect on habitats, plants, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians or birds. Local knowledge contradicts this:

- deer, brown hare, otters, badgers and bats are resident;
- red kites visit regularly;
- Great Crested Newt eDNA was found in a previous survey during the hibernation period, and newts have been seen; and
- bee orchids grow on adjacent land.

Ad hoc site visits have not captured the site's true biodiversity, contrary to Core Policy 50 and NPPF Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment). Chapter 11 should be corrected before the application is determined. The petition likewise objects to the loss of quiet, wooded green space and its wildlife, and to building on greenfield land while brownfield sites remain.

5. Inadequate consultation

The Statement of Community Engagement (July 2026) records 537 feedback forms. It does not mention letters of objection sent to Engage Planning Ltd, or the online petition, which now has over 2,300 signatures.

- **Town Council briefing, 17 June 2026.** The applicant describes this as an opportunity for councillors to raise questions. The meeting record shows several important issues went unanswered, with some decisions deferred to future housebuilders.
- **Letter drop.** Letters went to 1,628 addresses. For a scheme of this size there was no media coverage, and a large number of affected residents were not reached.

6. Errors in the application form

- The form states there are no employees on site. The land is farmed, so people work there even if they do not live there.
- The form states there will be no trade waste. The proposed local centre, with retail and health uses, would clearly generate trade waste.

7. Wider implications for the town and adequacy of local facilities

- The application makes no reference to the wider town infrastructure and capacity to cope with more residents.
- School, doctor and dental capacity is unlikely to be sufficient.
- Chippenham town centre is in urgent need of regeneration and investment.
- Chippenham has excellent rail links to London and Bristol but during main commuting periods these trains are often at capacity with standing room only. More house will lead to more commuters and even more overcrowding, or potentially commuters being unable to join the train (this has happened in the past when GWR runs a shorter train due to operational issues).

Conclusion

This application is speculative. It repeats proposals already rejected, tries to pre-empt the new Local Plan for the applicant's financial benefit, and disregards the clearly expressed wishes of a large number of Chippenham residents, now and in the past. Any benefits, including new housing, are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm set out above.

We ask Wiltshire Council to **refuse the application outright** and to proceed with preparing the new Local Plan from first principles.

Please acknowledge receipt of this objection, notify us of the committee date, so that we may attend.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Kevin & Amanda Bennett.

Kevin & Amanda Bennett

Sources

- [Appeal decision APP/Y3940/W/16/3150514, Forest Farm \(22 June 2017\)](#)
- [Wiltshire Council: Future Chippenham continues without HIF funding \(14 December 2022\)](#)
- [Change.org petition: Stop the proposed development near London Road and Pewsham Way](#)
- [Applicant's project website](#)
- [Calne News: application for up to 600 homes in Pewsham](#)